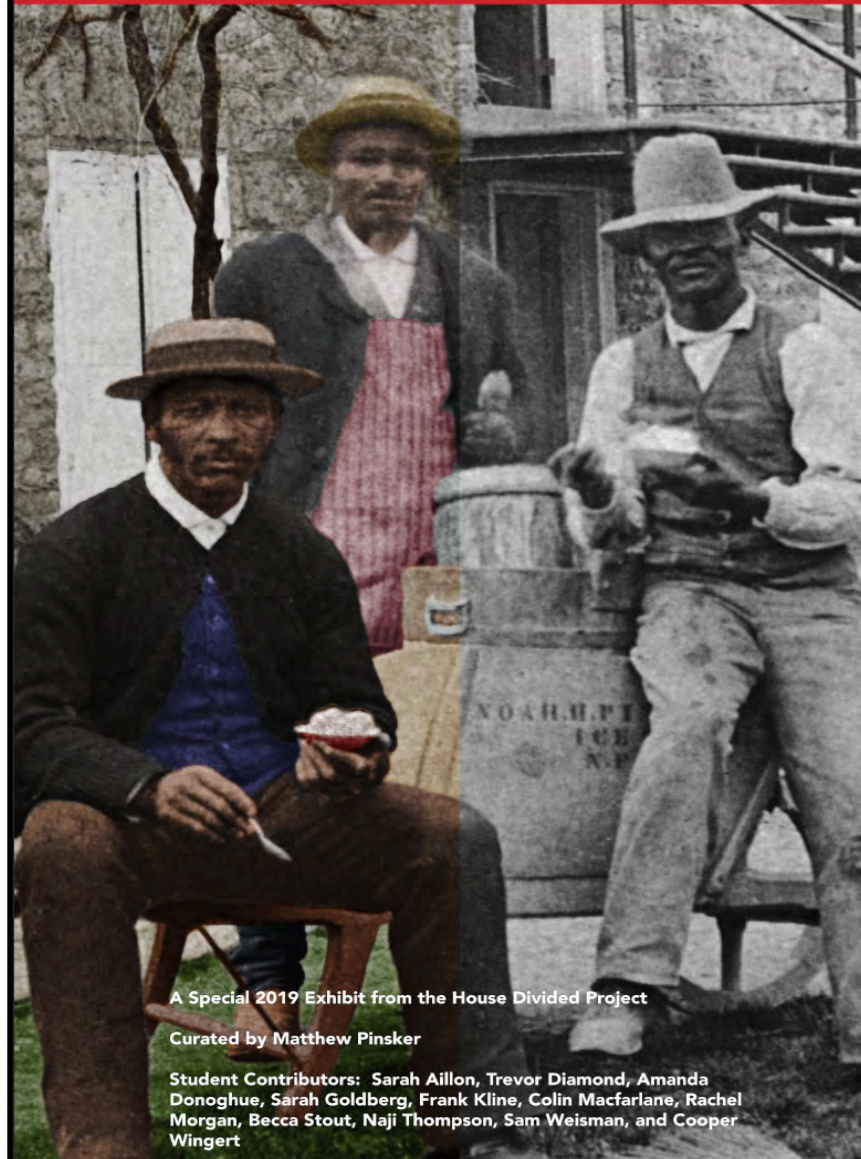


# Dickinson & Slavery

This catalog contains examples from the panels on display at the 2019 Dickinson & Slavery exhibit in the House Divided Project studio at 61 N. West Street, Carlisle. The exhibit is open to the public on Wednesdays from 9am to noon and by appointment. You can also explore more about the Dickinson & Slavery initiative at our website: <http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/slavery>



A Special 2019 Exhibit from the House Divided Project

Curated by Matthew Pinsker

Student Contributors: Sarah Aillon, Trevor Diamond, Amanda Donoghue, Sarah Goldberg, Frank Kline, Colin Macfarlane, Rachel Morgan, Becca Stout, Naji Thompson, Sam Weisman, and Cooper Wingert

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Special Thanks: Rick Beard, Chris Bombaro, Ryan Bowman, Madeline Brown, Ryan Burke, Chris Cowoski, Cumberland County Historical Society, Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections, Malinda Triller Doran, Facilities Management, FastSigns, Jim Gerencser, History Department, Harry Lewis, Library of Congress, Jeff McCausland, John Osborne, Pohanka Family Foundation, President's Commission on Community and Civic Learning and Engagement, Susan Segal, Sherwin-Williams, Craig Weeks, Neil Weisman, David Williams, and Cory Young



# Dickinson Founders and the Shadow of Slavery



US Constitution, September 17, 1787 (US Capitol)

## John Dickinson

John Dickinson was a Delaware slaveholder who had freed his own slaves. Sobered by this experience, in 1787, he asked his fellow constitutional framers a disturbing question: "What will be said of this new principle of founding a Right to govern Freemen on a power derived from Slaves?" Still, like most anti-slavery delegates to the constitutional convention, Dickinson swallowed his misgivings and endorsed the new US Constitution despite its failure to abolish American slavery.



Benjamin Rush (Dickinson College Archives)

## Benjamin Rush

Benjamin Rush always claimed that he hated slavery, but he still owned at least one enslaved man during his lifetime. Rush eventually freed his servant William Grubber, but not before keeping him long enough to provide what he called "a just compensation for my having paid for him the full price of a slave for life." Like most Founders, Rush seemed to embody the hypocrisy of the times, quietly accepting the necessity of American slavery while loudly proclaiming the promise of American freedom.



Charles Nisbet (Dickinson College Archives)

## Charles Nisbet

Unlike either Dickinson or Rush, the college's first president Charles Nisbet, never owned slaves. This fact seemed to give his antislavery sentiments more obvious conviction. In lectures that he delivered in 1789, the Scottish-born Nisbet was clear about what he expected to happen in the United States. Slaves, he observed ominously, lived with "concealed hatred" and "masked resentment" towards their masters. Nisbet warned his students, many of whom came from slaveholding families, that "the least spark may animate to destruction."



Benjamin Rush, with tools of learning and enslavement



# Dickinson College and the Shadow of Slavery

## John Montgomery

During the summer of 1787, John Montgomery, one of the founding trustees of Dickinson College, was not in Philadelphia helping to frame the new government. Instead, he was at home in Cumberland County, trying to sell a black woman and three children, including a six-month-old girl. Montgomery was not alone in this type of endeavor. Most of the college's early trustees were slaveholders, and some engaged in the buying and selling of human property. Today, Montgomery Hall is home to the Department of Theatre and Dance.

TO BE SOLD.  
A Strong, healthy Neg<sup>o</sup>  
Wench, and a female  
Child six months old, the wench  
is used to house work—Also  
two negro Boys, one about six  
and the other about four years  
old; time will be given for part  
of the purchase money.—For  
terms apply to John Montgo-  
mery, in Carlisle.

Carlisle Gazette, July 25, 1787 (Readex)

## "Black James"

The first major building on the Dickinson campus was under construction from 1799 to 1803 when it burned down following a storm. College records now reveal that enslaved labor contributed to this effort. Figures such as "Black James, Mr. Holmes's Negro" and "Black Ned" appear in key entries. The records for laborers are less certain regarding the construction of West College (or "Old West"), but area slaveholders were certainly involved in the project. That was not unusual. Pennsylvania had adopted an abolition law as early as 1780, but slavery lingered in Cumberland County for decades.



View of Old West, c. 1811 (Dickinson College Archives)

## Thomas Cooper

During the early nineteenth century, Dickinson often struggled financially. But one bright spot was the addition of noted scientist Thomas Cooper to the faculty. Yet Cooper soon left to become a college president in South Carolina, where he also emerged as one of the country's leading pro-slavery intellectuals. In his *Two Essays* (1826), Cooper warned that "the emancipation of the Slaves would surely convert them into idle and useless vagabonds, and thieves." In the early 1990s, the college renamed one of its student residence buildings as Cooper Hall.



Cooper Hall, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA

Benjamin Rush, with tools of  
learning and enslavement



# Dickinson and the Crisis Over Slavery



Old Courthouse in Carlisle, scene of the 1847 "McClintock riot" (John Osborne) and political cartoon on the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law (Library of Congress)

## Violence Over Fugitives

During the antebellum period, Dickinson produced notable abolitionists such as James McKim (Class of 1828) and Moncure Conway (Class of 1849), but the college also graduated the nation's most aggressive fugitive slave commissioner, Richard McAllister (Class of 1840), who operated out of Harrisburg. The crisis over runaway slaves came directly to Carlisle in 1847 with a violent episode outside the local courthouse that resulted in the death of a slavecatcher and a sensational trial involving Dickinson professor John McClintock and numerous members of the local African American resistance.



Two portraits of Roger B. Taney, about ages 48 and 83, in 1825 and 1860 (Dickinson Archives, Library of Congress)

## Political Crisis of the 1850s

Dickinson was also responsible for educating two of the most powerful men of the 1850s, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (Class of 1795) and President James Buchanan (Class of 1809). Taney, a native of Maryland, had emancipated slaves earlier in his life, but by 1857, when he authored the majority decision in the controversial Dred Scott case, he had become thoroughly pro-slavery. Both Taney and Buchanan blamed abolitionists for the nation's troubles.



Moncure Conway during the 1860s and two of the estimated thirty ex-slaves whom he helped escape to Ohio in 1862

## Wartime Emancipation

After civil war erupted in 1861, enslaved people began running away in greater numbers than ever before. James McKim organized extensive relief efforts for these freed people and assisted with recruiting soldiers. Moncure Conway pressured President Lincoln on emancipation, both in private and in public. When he became frustrated by the president's hesitation, the Southern-born abolitionist decided to take matters into his own hands. He encountered a group of about thirty ex-slaves from his family's Virginia plantation hiding in Washington, DC in 1862 and helped them relocate to Yellow Springs, Ohio.



George Norris was a former slave in the Confederate army who worked for years as a janitor at Dickinson.



# Dickinson and the Civil War Era

## Slave Hunt at Gettysburg

When the Confederate army invaded Pennsylvania in 1863, they vowed to hunt down missing slaves. In response, Rev. Thomas Creigh (Class of 1828) managed to negotiate the successful return of Amos Barnes, a black man from Mercersburg who had been captured during the campaign. Creigh helped secure Barnes's release by reaching out to a fellow Dickinson graduate and fellow minister from Richmond.



Thomas Creigh (1808-1880): "Discharged from Richmond," Chambersburg (PA) Franklin Repository, December 23, 1863

## Lobbying Lincoln

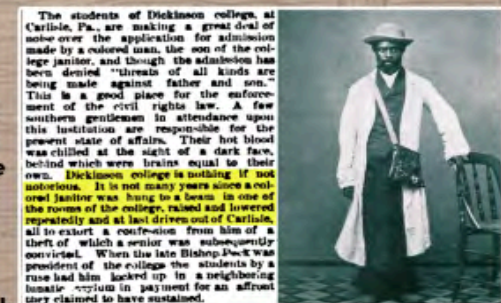
Dickinsonians often appealed to President Lincoln for help during the war. Mississippi planter Stephen Duncan (Class of 1805), one of the largest slaveholders in American history, supported the Union and tried to get the president to let him keep his slaves. Lucena Johnson, wife of the college president, ended up writing both General Grant and President Lincoln, asking for permission to sell cotton from her family's confiscated plantation. Rep. John Creswell worked with Lincoln to abolish slavery in Maryland and to secure final passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.



The 1860 census listed Stephen Duncan of Mississippi as the nation's second largest slaveholder. He was originally from Carlisle. Lucena Johnson was married to Herman M. Johnson, Dickinson's twelfth president. Her family owned cotton plantations.

## Violence After Slavery

After the war and during Reconstruction, there were still acts of violence directed against African Americans, perhaps even some at Dickinson. Sam Watts and his brother Henry were two black men who had been fixtures on campus since the 1850s, working mostly as janitors. But Sam Watts mysteriously lost his job around 1877 and then his life seemed to fall apart. He ended up dying alone in the Carlisle poor house. One Ohio newspaper suggested later that students at Dickinson had threatened an unnamed black janitor with lynching, believing mistakenly that he had committed theft. Was this the cause of Sam's tragic downfall? Because the historical records are so elusive, we may never know the answer.

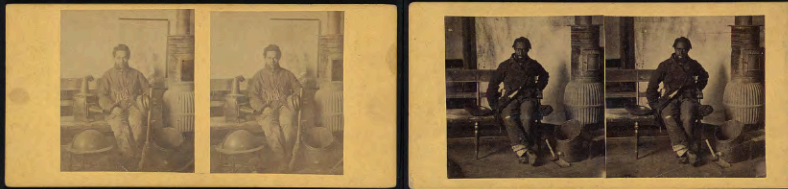


Springfield (OH) Globe-Republican, October 31, 1886; Sam Watts, c. 1870 (Dickinson College Archives)

George Norris was a former slave in the Confederate army who worked for years as a janitor at Dickinson.



During the Civil War, janitors Henry and Sam Watts posed for stereo card or 3D images taken by Charles F. Himes, a former student and future professor at Dickinson.



Henry W. Spradley escaped from slavery in Virginia during the Civil War and later became a popular janitor and bell-ringer at Dickinson during the 1880s and 1890s.



# Dickinson and the Color Line



Robert Young, around 1886, on the steps of Old West

In 1886, Dickinson janitor Robert C. Young requested that his son be admitted to the college's prep school. It was an ordinary desire, but one that seemed shocking to some because the Youngs were black. There had never before been a black student at the school. Most American colleges were still segregated. So, when nervous school officials hesitated, Young decided to go public.

**"KEPT OUT OF COLLEGE,"** blared the *Philadelphia Times* headline, "A Colored Boy Who Wants to Be Educated at Dickinson." Another paper was more merciless: "The southern young bloods who have been airing race prejudice at Dickinson College are evidently beginning to feel their inferiority to the negro." The story earned intense coverage from newspapers across the country.

All of this scrutiny put Dickinson officials on the defensive. They claimed (weakly) that Young had just failed to make a proper application. They then admitted the janitor's son, although he only ended up taking courses for about a year. It would be another fifteen years before John Robert Paul Brock (Class of 1901) became the college's first black graduate. Then it was not until 1919 that Esther Popel (Shaw), became Dickinson's first female black graduate. Fortunately, Robert Young, who had been born into slavery, lived long enough to see these overdue changes. He died in 1922, not only as the college's longest serving employee, but also as its great pioneer in civil rights.



John Robert Paul Brock  
Class of 1901

## First African American Graduates

1823	Middlebury	1883	Penn
1826	Amherst	1901	<b>Dickinson</b>
1828	Dartmouth	1926	Haverford
1844	Oberlin	1947	Swarthmore
1870	Harvard	1950	F&M
1874	Yale	1956	Gettysburg

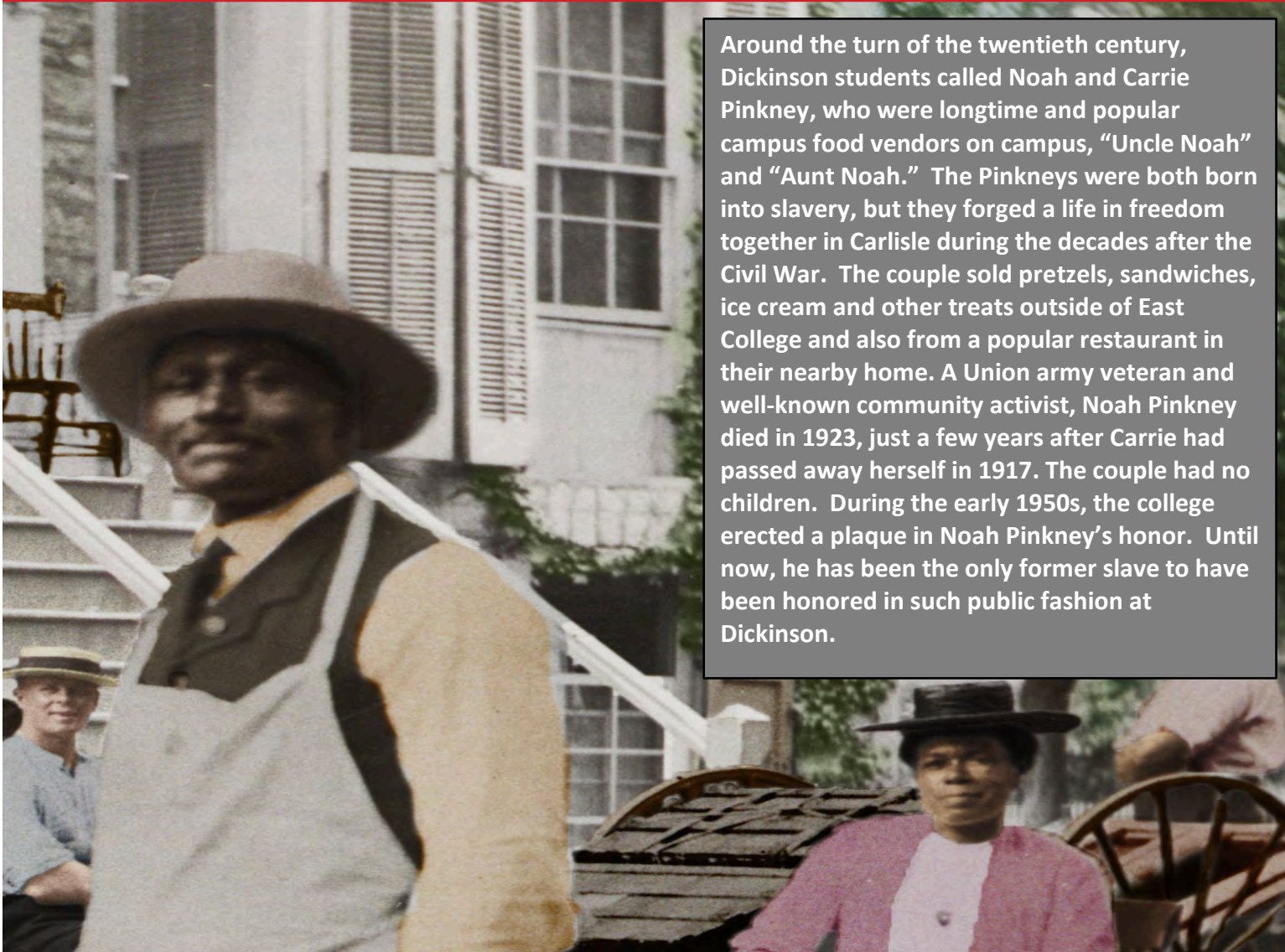


Esther Popel (Shaw)  
Class of 1919

All images courtesy of the Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections



# Noah and Carrie Pinkney



Around the turn of the twentieth century, Dickinson students called Noah and Carrie Pinkney, who were longtime and popular campus food vendors on campus, “Uncle Noah” and “Aunt Noah.” The Pinkneys were both born into slavery, but they forged a life in freedom together in Carlisle during the decades after the Civil War. The couple sold pretzels, sandwiches, ice cream and other treats outside of East College and also from a popular restaurant in their nearby home. A Union army veteran and well-known community activist, Noah Pinkney died in 1923, just a few years after Carrie had passed away herself in 1917. The couple had no children. During the early 1950s, the college erected a plaque in Noah Pinkney’s honor. Until now, he has been the only former slave to have been honored in such public fashion at Dickinson.

From Dickinson & Slavery exhibit, House Divided Project studio, 61 N. West Street, Carlisle, PA 17013 or at <http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/slavery>



# A Blueprint for Freedom

Sometime around the summer of 1890, Dickinson College professor Charles F. Himes (Class of 1855) took this striking cyanotype or blueprint image of a local food vendor, Noah H. Pinkney, serving ice cream to a group of black men outside of East College. The three central figures in this image—Pinkney (standing, center), Robert C. Young (seated, front), and Henry W. Spradley (leaning)—were all former slaves. Spradley was the oldest of the group, a native of Winchester, Virginia, then in his late 50s or early 60s. A beloved janitor and bell-ringer at Dickinson, Spradley was a veteran of the Union army. When he died in 1897, the school closed for the day to host his memorial service in partnership with the local West Street AME church. Pinkney was about 15 years younger than Spradley, a native of Frederick, Maryland, and also a Union veteran. He was present with his regiment at Appomattox in 1865 for the Confederate surrender. By 1890, Pinkney and his wife Carrie were already renowned on campus for selling pretzels, sandwiches, ice cream and other treats. "Fine as silk, sah, Dickinson sandwiches, fine as silk," was how student Boyd L. Spahr later remembered the way "Uncle Noah" delivered his favorite sales pitch. Pinkney was close friends with Robert Young, a native of Virginia. After the Civil War, Young had worked as a servant in the college president's household and then as a college janitor. He also became campus policeman, ultimately compiling more than forty years of service to the college. At the time of this photograph, however, Young was probably best known for his efforts to integrate Dickinson. In 1886, he fought to get his oldest son admitted to the college's preparatory school. The episode garnered national attention, and even though Robert G. Young only took classes for about a year, it was an important milestone in the struggle toward Northern civil rights. Not too long afterward, John Brock (Class of 1901) became the first black man to graduate from Dickinson College. Esther Popel (Shaw) then became the first black woman to graduate in 1919. Integration at the college was thus a long time in coming, but at least some early Dickinsonians, like Professor Himes, who had attended the school when slavery was still legal in America, lived long enough to see the beginning of this transition from freedom to equality.



Original cyanotype, c. 1890 by Prof. Charles Himes (Class of 1855); adapted by Prof. John Osborne in 2018 and colorized by Amanda Donoghue (Class of 2019)



Left to Right: Henry Spradley, Shirley Spradley, and Robert Young, c. 1885



Noah and Carrie Pinkney selling food outside of East College



Robert Young and Noah Pinkney in old age

Images courtesy of the Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections



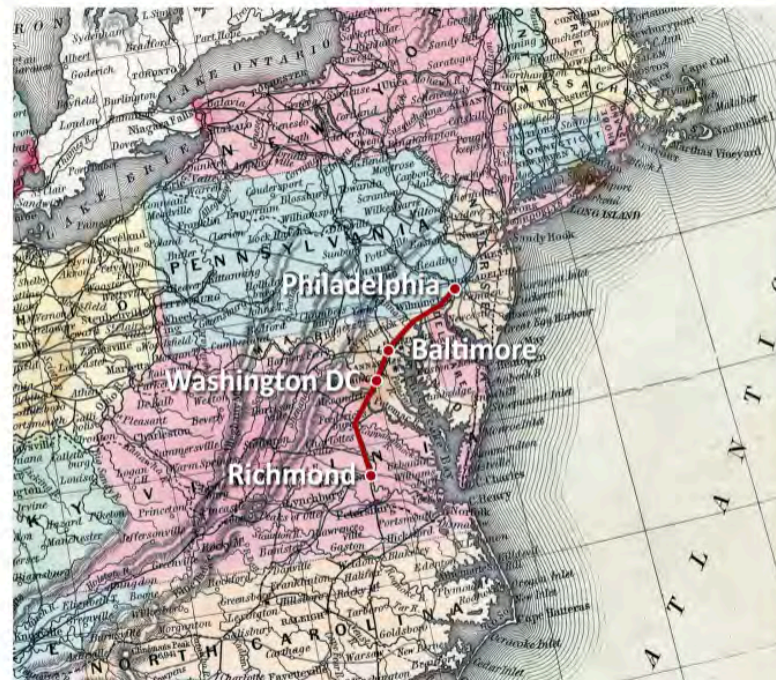


Original cyanotype, c. 1890 by Prof. Charles Himes (Class of 1855); adapted by Prof. John Osborne in 2018 and colorized by Amanda Donoghue (Class of 2019)



# Henry "Box" Brown

In March 1849, a man named Henry Brown traveled from Richmond to Philadelphia in a most unusual way. Brown, a Virginia slave distraught because his enslaved wife and children had just been sold away from him, made a series of secret arrangements to escape to freedom. The help of some brave friends, a wide network of antislavery allies, and a new shipping service advertised by the Adams Express Company made his daring operation possible. Brown planned to hide inside a box until he was safely delivered to the Anti-Slavery office in Philadelphia. The journey itself took just over 24 hours, by wagon, train, and boat. Everyone involved knew the risks, but the heartbroken husband and father insisted on making the desperate effort to flee from enslavement.



Map showing Henry Brown's route in 1849 adapted from Mitchell's New Universal Atlas (Philadelphia, 1857).

From Dickinson & Slavery exhibit, House Divided Project studio, 61 N. West Street, Carlisle, PA 17013 or at <http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/slavery>



# The Dickinson Express

Henry “Box” Brown enjoyed his miraculous “resurrection” in Philadelphia on March 24, 1849, in the presence of some leading vigilance or Underground Railroad agents from the North. Two of those men were associated with Dickinson College. James Miller McKim (Class of 1828), head of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society was the man who later convinced nervous representatives of the Adams Express Company not to suspend the abolitionist society’s shipping privileges once the escape became public that summer. Nobody from Pennsylvania went to jail for assisting in this “liberty line” operation, but the sensational episode contributed to Southern calls for a tougher federal fugitive slave law. Henry Brown, however, lived as a free man in the United States, England and Canada until his death in 1897. But he never reunited with his first wife Nancy or their children.



*Figures from left to right: Lewis Thompson, abolitionist printer; James Miller McKim (Class of 1828), Anti-Slavery Society leader; Henry “Box” Brown; William Still, Underground Railroad or vigilance leader; and Charles Dexter Cleveland, former Dickinson College professor. Engraving by John Osler in William Still, The Underground Railroad (Philadelphia, 1872).*

From Dickinson & Slavery exhibit, House Divided Project studio, 61 N. West Street, Carlisle, PA 17013 or at <http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/slavery>

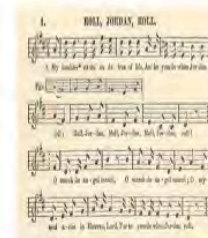


# From Slavery to Freedom

Enslaved Americans began seizing opportunities for freedom as soon as the Civil War broke out, in places like the Virginia Peninsula or across the Sea Islands around South Carolina, wherever Union forces held southern territory. The Northern press often dubbed these freed people, such as the extended family pictured here, as “contrabands.” Noted Pennsylvania abolitionist James Miller McKim (Class of 1828) visited contraband families in Union-occupied South Carolina during the spring of 1862 with his nineteen-year-old daughter Lucy. It was here that McKim encountered Prince Rivers, a remarkable figure who later became color sergeant in the First South Carolina Volunteers. Lucy McKim (Garrison), a pioneering musicologist, also gathered material on this trip that helped produce the first printed songbook of African American spirituals. Both father and daughter died in the 1870s, shortly after their extensive wartime efforts to help secure freedom. Yet the McKims lived long enough to see the “second founding” of the US Constitution, with ratification of the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) amendments, guaranteeing the end of slavery, citizenship for the former slaves, and the right to vote for black men.



Five Generations in Beaufort, SC, by Timothy O'Sullivan, 1862; courtesy of Library of Congress; colorized by Amanda Donoghue (Class of 2019)



From L to R: James McKim, music from Slave Songs of the United States (1867), Lucy McKim Garrison. Images courtesy of House Divided Project and University of North Carolina





Five Generations of an ex-slave family in Beaufort, SC, by Timothy O'Sullivan, 1862; courtesy of Library of Congress; colorized by Amanda Donoghue (Class of 2019)



# Freedom for Families

Dred and Harriet Scott were an enslaved couple from Missouri held illegally in bondage in a free territory by an owner who had served as a surgeon in the U.S. army. After he died, they sued to obtain freedom for themselves and their two daughters, Eliza and Lizzie. Their legal odyssey was long and complicated, extending from 1846 until 1857, but the Scott's motivation was easy enough to understand. They wanted to protect their family. Slave marriages were not legal, and enslaved families were frequently separated. Ultimately, the Scotts lost their case in the U.S. Supreme Court, opposed by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (Class of 1795), but they soon received freedom anyway from their new owner. For many black soldiers, the purpose of the Civil War was essentially the same –a struggle to protect their families. This image of men in Company E of the 4th US Colored Infantry helps illustrate this point. If you look carefully, you can find at least one soldier proudly displaying his wedding band. This vivid photograph was taken just weeks before ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, which not only abolished slavery in 1865, but also made possible, finally, the legal protection of all African American families.



The Scott family: Harriet, Eliza, Lizzie and Dred. Original illustrations from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*; adapted by Lance Warren; courtesy of House Divided Project



Men of Company E, 4th US Colored Infantry, Fort Lincoln, Washington, DC, November 17, 1865 by William Morris Smith, courtesy of Library of Congress and colorized by Naji Thompson (Class of 2019)





Men of Company E, 4th US Colored Infantry, Fort Lincoln, Washington, DC, November 17, 1865 by William Morris Smith, courtesy of Library of Congress and colorized by Naji Thompson (Class of 2019)



# Constitutional Crisis

On March 4, 1857, U.S. President James Buchanan (Class of 1809) took the oath of office from Chief Justice Roger Taney (Class of 1795). It should have been a proud moment for Dickinson College, but over the next four years, these two men seemed to preside over a series of catastrophes as the nation hurtled toward a final crisis concerning the fate of slavery. The trouble began almost immediately, with Taney's announcement of the Supreme Court's 7-2 verdict against Dred Scott. The ruling not only denied Scott citizenship, but also overturned the 1820 Missouri Compromise and any hopes of containing the spread of slavery in the West. Soon the Buchanan Administration was overwhelmed. The election of 1860 delivered power to the new Republican Party and propelled several Southern states to secede. Buchanan believed secession was unconstitutional, but felt he had no power to stop it. Then when new President Abraham Lincoln asserted sweeping authority to suspend civil liberties and to employ coercion against the secession rebellion, Chief Justice Taney tried to stop him. Lincoln and the Republicans ultimately prevailed, and the Union was saved, but the reputations of Buchanan and Taney never recovered.



Clockwise, right to left: 1860 presidential candidates Abraham Lincoln with African American woman, John Bell with Native American, Stephen Douglas with Irish immigrant, and John Breckinridge with Buchanan ("Old Buck"). Dred Scott in center. 1860 Political cartoon courtesy of Library of Congress.



1861 political cartoon by Michael Angelo Woolf; courtesy of Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections





Portraits of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney (Class of 1795) and President James Buchanan (Class of 1809), courtesy of the Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections



# War and Photography

During the Civil War, pioneering photographers like Mathew Brady and his corps of talented assistants, such as Alexander Gardner (who later became a top professional rival), riveted public attention with their intimate portraits of President Abraham Lincoln and with their sobering views of death on the battlefield. After Brady first exhibited images of Antietam in October 1862, the *New York Times* wrote, "Mr. BRADY has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it." Almost at the same time that Brady and Gardner were revolutionizing wartime photography, Charles F. Himes (Class of 1855), then a young college science professor, was experimenting on his own with the medium in Carlisle. Himes took a series of stereo or 3D views of the town and Dickinson College around 1862. Most notably, Himes had college janitors Henry "Judge" Watts and his brother Sam Watts pose in a memorable setting by a coal stove inside a campus building, near tools of learning: a magic lantern (or early projector), floor globe, and skeletal chart.



Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan, in the general's tent after the Battle of Antietam, October 1862; Confederate dead in front of the Dunker Church at Antietam, September 1862; both images by Alexander Gardner, courtesy of the Library of Congress



Stereo view of janitor Henry Watts inside Dickinson College, c. 1862, by Charles F. Himes; courtesy of Library of Congress; colorized by Sarah Aillon (Class of 2019)





Confederate dead in front of the Dunker Church at Antietam, September 1862 by Alexander Gardner, courtesy of the Library of Congress



## Former Slaves and Free Blacks Who Helped Shape Dickinson



William Agy, janitor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



Andrew Beals, janitor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



James Beals, janitor  
Born free in Pennsylvania



William Jackson, janitor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



George Norris, Sr., janitor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



Noah H. Pinkney, food vendor  
Born enslaved in Maryland



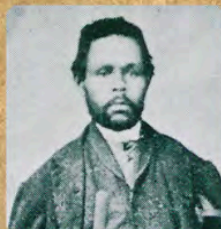
Carrie Pinkney, food vendor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



Henry W. Spradley, janitor  
Born enslaved in Virginia



Shirley Spradley, janitor  
Born free in Pennsylvania



Henry Watts, janitor  
Born free in Maryland



Sam Watts, janitor  
Born free in Maryland



Robert C. Young, janitor, policeman  
Born enslaved in Virginia

### Other Early African American Residents of Carlisle Who Helped Shaped Life at Dickinson College

Alexander Bowman (janitor)  
William Burgess (barber)  
Frank Butcher (janitor)  
Peter Hodge (barber)

Taylor Humphries (policeman)  
John Jenkins (waiter)  
Robert Lane (bootblack)  
Frank Lewis (janitor)

Jacob Newman (contractor)  
George Norris, Jr. (janitor)  
John Peck (barber)  
James Powell (bootblack)

Richard Sellers (heating foreman)  
George Stinson (waiter)  
William Webb (barber)  
Harry Young (janitor)